

U.S. Appln. No. 10/048,103
After-Final Response

PATENT
450101-03243

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which place the application into condition for allowance. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-6, 13-19, 21, 22 and 24-26 are currently pending. Claims 1, 13, 19, 21, 22 and 24-26, which are independent, are hereby amended. No new matter has been introduced. Support for this amendment is provided throughout the Specification as originally filed. Changes to claims are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Claims 1, 2, 13-14, 19, 21, 22 and 24-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly anticipated over U.S. Patent No. 6,510,243 to Ikeda et al (hereafter, merely "Ikeda").

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*:

"means for coupling image data corresponding to the designation data to form a group corresponding to an object;

...means for uncoupling the image data within the group, coupled by the coupling means corresponding to the designation data, according to each feature of image data corresponding to the designation data" (emphasis added)

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As understood by Applicants, Ikeda relates to a method for localizing an area the user is interested in as designated in a received image data by clicking the mouse or the like at the receiving side, for example, a method for extracting object images. As described by Ikeda, however, since the object image is not reviewed, objects which are extracted as object images at an uncoupled time as another object image will always be handled as belonging to the same object.

The image processing apparatus recited in claim 1 can couple image data to form a group corresponding to an object. Furthermore, the image processor apparatus can uncouple the image data within the group. Thus, the apparatus of claim 1 has the coupling and uncoupling function.

Applicants submit that Ikeda fails to address the issues solved by the claimed invention. Applicants respectfully submit that Ikeda discloses extracting a region with an attribute "caption" and displaying a retrieval result that matches a designated word. Applicants submit that Figure 4 of Ikeda specifically shows that the regions with an attribute "caption" are not associated with an object, as recited in claim 1.

Applicants respectfully submit that Ikeda fails to disclose or suggest the features of claim 1.

Therefore, Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable.

For reasons similar to those described above with regard to independent claim 1, independent claims 13, 19, 21, 22 and 24-26 are also believed to be patentable.

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III. DEPENDENT CLAIMS

The other claims are dependent from one of the independent claims discussed above, and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In addition, Applicants gratefully thank the Examiner for pointing out that claims 3-6 and 15-18 contain allowable subject matter.

CONCLUSION

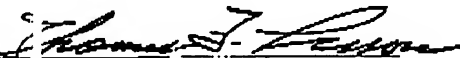
The pending claims are in condition for allowance. In the event the Examiner disagrees with any of statements appearing above with respect to the disclosure in the cited reference, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner specifically indicate those portions of the reference providing the basis for a contrary view.

Please charge any additional fees that may be needed, and credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable and Applicants respectfully request early passage to issue of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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